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Icterus or Jaundice

T. Bates Anderson

An Essay
on
Icterus or Jaundice

by

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of Virginia,

"Nam" in administrandis remediis memoria semper tenere oportet, non nominis morbi solum, neque sane generalis ejus naturæ, rationem esse habendam, sed multas vel minutissimas sæpe res esse respiciendas, tum quæ ad morbi originem et causas, et indiciorum varietatem et conjunctionem, tum quæ ad ægri statum, et vires, et peculiarem fortasse corporis constitutionem, attinent. Gregor. Consp. et Med. Theor. et. vol. II. P. 3.

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as I conceive it to be of more importance, to correct the errors, and to arrange in order and regularity, the various facts, which are already known in medicine; than to be labouring, and building theory on Theories: I shall in as plain and perspicuous a manner as I am able, make a few observations, on Jaundice, together with its History, Symptoms, and method of cure.

This as well as many other diseases, has had and still remains to have, its Specifics, in the hands of Quacks, Many have been undeceived, who have discovered, that many patients recovered who had taken, other medicines, or none at all, in as short a space of time as those, who had taken the much admired Infallible.

But as long as Credulity is so prominent in the human mind, especially of those who are tortured by disease; and as long as there are men who at the risk of the lives of those unfortunate beings, will hold out Restoratives and Grand Elixirs of Health, So long will the progress, of the science of medicine be retarded, and Thousands fall victims to their

ignorance

Ignorance and Credulity.

I will not pretend to say that quack medicines have "never done any good", for I believe there have been cases, in which the regular bred practitioner has used all the remedies, which Reason, experiance or the best of theories, may have taught him to prescribe; Yet all have availed nothing, and by the assistance of a quack medicine the patient has been restored to health in a short time, But still these cases have been few, when compared to the number in which either no good or death has been the consequence.

In many of those cases in which the patient has recovered, we cannot say correctly, to what credit they are entitled; Who knows, but a favourable Crisis had taken place, or that the patient would have recovered, had nothing been administered.

Certain it is that, he who prescribes the same medicine, whatever be the diseases, or rather, whatever be the state of the System, must, in many instances err, and in none oftener, than in the one I am about to treat of.

These are facts which appear to be well

well known to every one, yet how few seem to be the exertions made to overthrow this growing evil, true it is that delicacy is to be admired, in all, but when we see the injuries which every day, accrue from too much delicacy on this subject, why will not the lovers of the health and lives of mankind unite in one common cause, the Abolishment of Empyricism "To get rid of Poisonous weeds we should endeavour to destroy their seeds" To get rid of this we should strike at its foundation, and since our Country is yet in its infancy, may we not hope, that she may be freed from the evil, But I am sorry to say that this evil, has kept a pace with her increase "It grows with her growth and strengthens with her strength"

Simplicity in Medicine is to be admired as well as in Religion. It may be said by some that the more mysterious we be in our actions and prescriptions, the better, by this means we have one of the greatest assistants, the Confidence or rather the ~~faith~~ of our patients, I know the power of the mind over the body, which should never be lost sight of, by a Physician, and that

that it is owing to this in great measure, that quacks have such success. But I will ask, Would it not be better for our patients to have full confidence in our prescriptions, brought on by Reason, than by vain pretensions. certainly it appears to be more concordant to Polished and Civilized life, And instead of being thought to have communications with ——. as some of the ignorant have supposed. Let them rather think, we obtained relief from him who made us.

I shall now attend to the subject of my essay — Icterus. or Jaundice —

It is defined to be a Yellowness of the Skin, and white of the eyes, the faces of a white clay colour, the urine obscurely red, tinging linen of a yellow colour: These symtoms are the most prominent but when it arises from gallstones, as shall hereafter be mentioned, Pain about the pit of the Stomach, Nausea, Vomiting, Costiveness &c.

Jaundice arises from a stoppage of the Ductus Choledochus which prevents the excretion of Bile or 2. from too great a secretion of it; In either case it is taken into the general System, in the

first instance, it has been supposed by regurgitation and in the second by absorption, In most cases, I am of opinion that it is taken in by absorption, although I do not deny that is ever taken in by Regurgitation, it certainly is taken in by absorption, when Jaundice is induced by too great a secretion

Obstructions of the Ducts are caused either by 1st Inflammation, 2nd Gall Stones, 3rd Spasms, or 4th Compression.

1st Jaundice sometimes occurs in Hepatitis, in which case inflammation extends down the gall ducts and causes a suppression, perhaps by a thickening of the Coats of the duct, whether coagulating Lymph is ever thrown into the duct in such manner as to cause adhesion I cannot say but think it possible

2nd Gall-Stones (or as Dr. Leake thinks more properly Biliary Concretions) are lodged either in the Gall Bladder or the Ducts. And when they are the cause of Jaundice, the pains are acute, Lancinating about the Liver, and often in the right shoulder, the patient often complains of a pain at the pit of the stomach. The patient being easy for a short time, and the pains again returning

* an itching of the skin often attends.

returning with great violence, the Stomach being often so much affected in these fits that Nausea & Vomiting are induced

During the time that the Calculus is passing from the Gall Bladder through the duct the pain is much more excruciating: Coldness of the Feet and Back, a cold sweat sometimes attends, wherever the Stone may lodge there the pain is felt most severe, this is generally about the entrance of the Duct into the Duodenum, the pain is circumscribed, the patient can scarcely be still in any position, leaning forwards seems generally to give most relief, during this time the Bowels are constipated, When the faeces are evacuated they are of a light Clay colour owing to the Bile being prevented from entering the duodenum.

By Regurgitation, or as I believe Absorption, almost the whole body becomes of a yellow colour, the Skin*, the Whites of the eyes, The Urine tinges white Substances of a yellow colour

After the violent Symptoms above enumerated have existed some time, they entirely cease, either from the passage of the Gall Stone into the

Duodenum, or as has been supposed sometimes to happen, getting back into the Gall Bladder.

The patient now relieved, supposes himself quite well, but to his great disappointment, in the course of a week, more or less, he is again attacked with the same violent symptoms. Coming on with a sense of lassitude, loss of appetite, flatulency, together with acid eructations, Costiveness, and after a while yellowness of the Eyes and Skin, high coloured urine, a Bitter taste, Nausea & Vomiting, obtuse pain in the right Hypochondrium &c. more or less attend; Fever is sometimes brought on.

3.rd Spasms, the Symptoms from Spasms are nearly the same as those above enumerated at any rate it is almost impossible to discriminate for these reasons, I shall treat of the method of cure under the same head.

4.th Compression, under this head comes Tumors, enlargement of the Liver, Pancreas, Mesentery &c To which may be added Pregnancy, these by pressure on the Duodenum & Bile ducts, prevent the free passage of the Bile into the Duodenum. We may generally know when it originates from

from the above mentioned causes, either by previous disease existing in some one of those viscera, or by feeling we may readily discover, if there be a preternatural enlargement of any of them

From the enlargement and consequent rising up of the Uterus in pregnancy, pressure is sometimes made on those parts, and Jaundice the consequence, especially if the female has never before been pregnant or borne a child This occurs sometimes in the first, but oftener during the latter months of pregnancy –

5.th The Jaundice which attacks very young Children treated of by authors under the name of Icterus infantum or Yellow Gum. This is caused by a stoppage of the Biliary duct, either by retained Meconium, or viscid matter of some kind, and fortunate, tho frequently, by imperforation of the duct at its juncture with the duodenum

It generally comes on with, great lassitude or indolence, a Yellow Skin, and Bilious Urine, Sleepiness, which often proves fatal, unlys the obstruction be removed in a short time.

A kind of Jaundice, sometimes arises

from Wounds & fractures of the Cranium also from the bites of some poisonous animals, there are some other causes, but they are rare, and I shall pass by them, with only observing, that, we should in those cases only regard it as a Symptom, the cause being removed the disorder disappears.

Having described as accurately as I am able the causes and Symptoms of Jaundice I shall after making a few observations, go on to treat of the method of cure adapted to each.

Of the causes and formation of Gall Stones

Few people are affected with Jaundice who have lived temperately and taken sufficient exercise, unless in very warm Climates, where disorders of the Liver appear to be almost inevitable; and even there those who live temperately and pay strict attention to exercise, are less frequently and more slightly affected, with those disorders.

Man was made to be active and temperate if he neglects exercise, and indulges in Intemperance, Disease is kindly sent to give him timely warning, Is not this a blessing in disguise?

In warm Climates the liver is often so much disordered

disordered, as to be almost insensible to Stimuli especially, such a one as the Bile. Its functions are so much impeded by its torpor, that the bile is with difficulty carried to the duodenum. In cases of this kind, I believe with Dr. Darwin, that the absorbents act, which take away the more fluid parts, the more viscid by long stagnation, forming Gall stones, or as Dr Leake thinks, more properly call.d, Biliary concretions, for says he there is no nucleus.

If this Theory be correct, which carries great probability with it, we may easily account for the formation of Biliary concretions, in Hard drinkers, in the Sedentary and those who labour under great distress of mind.

As the inordinate use of ardent Spirits has become so common of late in all parts of the United States, I might spend a few moments, in considering its effects on the body and mind, had not the subject been so ably handled already, by one* who deserves well of his Country and mankind.

I shall therefore only speak of it as respects my present subject, from which I am afraid I have

* Bush.s med. enquir: and observations:

* the secretions of Bile is always at first increased.

astray.d too far already;

Ardent Spirits increases the vital actions* and for a while expels care from the mind, and the more we are accostomed to take the greater the necessity. according to one of the laws of Sensation. "Impressions require to be increased after habit has rendered them inactive in order for Sensation to be produced."

This being carried to such an extent, as to exhaust the excitability not only of the Liver, but of the whole System. Now the Secretion and excretion of Bile which for a long time had been kept up, more by the Stimulus of ardent Spirits, than the natural Stimulus of Bile, Stops, and this so much the sooner, if the use of ardent Spirits be abruptly Stopp.d

The absorbents act in the same manner as above mentioned and Biliary concretions are formed Jaundice with all its symptoms follow, and from such causes as this, Death often ends the scene, I do not by this, wish to be understood that Jaundice is always the Consequence, of the immoderate use of Spirits, but that it very often is, must be well known to every one

I deem it useless to say any thing of the

* Dr. Darwin says he has seen to cases of Jaundice from gout attacking the Liver.

I wish that I could state certainly that calculi are formed in the Liver from Gout. J.B.A. —

formation of Biliary Concretions in the Sedentary and distress of mind, by this time it must be very evident to every one.

Lastly, The Gout. this disease is not confined to any one part of the Body, it flies like lightning from one part of the body to another, and "Debility as certainly invites it, as a metalic rod does lightning." The Liver is often affected by this disease, causing all the disorders to which this viscus is liable, Inflammation, and I have not the least doubt, but Schirri and Chalk stones, in the same manner as in the Kidneys* and from one or other of these causes Jaundice* is the consequence, there is Nephritis Arthritica, Gonorrhoea Arthritica, why not Hepatitis Arthritica

Of the cure.

However desperate the case may appear, when called, we should endeavour to relieve the distress, and I shall now treat of the cure of Jaundice from its different causes above enumerated, and

1st When Jaundice arises from inflammation extending from the liver to the duct, as sometime happens in Hepatitis, The remedies for that disease are to be used, The inflammation, being

subdued

subdued, the disorder is removed, I will here remark that obstructions are most commonly the effect of inflammation, but in hot climates, disorder of the Liver often precede inflammation

2nd From Gall stones, or Biliary Concretions the first thing we should endeavour to do, is, to expel the gall stones which produce these violent Symptoms, the impossibility of dissolving them is well known, therefore our remedies should be such as relieve pain, and produce a relaxation of the parts, in order that they may suffer the Biliary Concretions to enter the Duodenum and be conveyd out of the body with the faces,

These are

1st Bloodletting, If the patient be plethoric and inflammatory symptoms attend this may be used to considerable extent. It often relieves excruciating pain and relaxes the system in a remarkable degree, luxated limbs which could not be reduced by any other means, have often yielded to the strength of one person after copious bleeding, nearly ad Deliquium animi

In some instances the patient is so much debilitated that we should be cautious how we use it, nevertheless I hold it to be one of our best remedies, we can regulate it according to the state of our patient; we may at the same time administer whatever medicines, we may think proper

2nd The Warm Bath. This is also a remedy of the greatest importance, It relaxes the whole system and in patients much debilitated, should never be neglected, Patients may be kept in it until great sickness, almost to fainting, has been induced, Partial applications of this remedy may also be used with great advantage, such as bladders of warm water applied over the parts affected, warm fomentations, After the application of these, Emollient glysters, Opium in a solid form, to prevent its being thrown up by vomiting

3rd Nauseating medicines, such as Antimonials in small doses, frequently repeated Dovers Powders have been used with advantage,

4th Emetics, These have long been employed, with the intention of expelling Gall stones from the Biliary Ducts, and producing

producing a discharge of bile into the Duodenum, But when the pain is great, and inflammation runs high, they should never be given with the intention of inducing Vomiting, For they would be apt to increase those symptoms.

Should none of those symptoms attend, they should be tried in almost every case. They act as a nauseating medicine and at the same time mechanically, For in the act of Vomiting, pressure is made on the gall Bladder, by the Liver, Intestines, and abdominal muscles, By which pressure Gall stones, are often expelled from that Viscus, and likewise from the ducts.

5.thly Purgatives, after we have tried the use of the above mentioned remedies, and often before, these should certainly have a trial For we well know that purgative medicines excite the action of the intestines and adjacent parts during their operation a greater quantity of bile is thrown into the Duodenum,

It has been said that if Jaundice arises from a chronic affection of the Liver, Then no harm by bringing on still greater Debility

I think that we may in most cases, venture to try them, If they should do no good and debilitate the patient, we can at once discover it and omit them,

It is also said by some that they are useful when the Bowels are constipated, and should never be used in any other case, Very well for those practitioners that the Bowels are generally in that state, But if Purgatives act as above mentioned, they certainly would be of service were the Bowels not much constipated. A Diarrhoea has sometimes been known to carry off the disorder, What would be the effect of an artificial Diarrhoea, in some cases when the debility is not great?

When we trust the cure to purgatives they should be drastic and combined with Calomel; Neutral salts, Soap & Alkalis are very highly recommended in this disorder Oil & Spirits of Turpentine, of late has been much recommended in Europe

6th Riding on Horseback, and other modes of exercise, is never to be neglected when the

the patient is able. By agitation it assists, the sluggish circulation through the Liver, and prevents the formation of biliary concretions in the Gall Bladder. By this list of remedies the patients mind is diverted in some measure from the thoughts of his situation by the various objects which every moment present themselves, at any rate, if it does not afford amusement it counteracts (what is ever to be dreaded) despair.

7.th, A Mercurial Salivation.

This is never to be resorted to when great inflammation attends, but in Chronic Inflammation attended with obstructions of the Liver &c, when the patient is not in a very excitable state and especially if any of the other viscera be at the same time affected, the Spleen, Pancreas or Mesenteric Glands &c. This certainly is an indispensable remedy. Mercury it is well known is an universal Stimulus, every fibre in the body is pervious to its penetrating effects, the Skin, all the Viscera, and even the Bones.

Some have gone so far, as to say that,

that Mercury has a specific action on the Liver Mercury having cleared away obstructions, all the organs will perform with ease, their natural functions.

Numerous are the remedies which are recommended in this disorder. Dr. Rush recommends from his own experience, Taraxicum or Dandelion, this is a mucilaginous bitter and diuretic Dr. Leake recommends this as well as other Saponacous vegitables, as he calls them.

In Chronic cases attended with Anasarca, Diuretics as Nitre, Saline purges &c have been supposed to be the best medicines. Bitters. Ether, Bath, Riding on horseback, have been all recommended in particular states of the System: Cicuta, Chalybeate waters; Ether mixed with Yolk of egg or honey, and Electricity have been recommended by Dr. Darwin, the latter of which the Doctor has used with success in many instances the shock being passed along the course of the Bile duct. This I suppose with

often be of advantage;

For the analysis of Gall stones, I refer to Chemical writers.

4.thly Compression, when from enlargement of any of the viscera, we should endeavour to remove the enlargement, and the Jaundice will be removed as soon as that is done. In such cases, we should never neglect to keep the Bowels open by gentle laxatives

The Jaundice which is brought on by Pregnancy, will disappear after delivery, but we should in this case, give aperient medicines, of a mild nature: Most of the remedies above enumerated, would be too harsh for a tender female in this situation. Tart: Vit: Ol: Ricin: &c should be made use of, until Delivery

5.thly The Jaundice which attacks Children, comes on in a few days after birth. The causes have been enumerated above. The milk of the mothers breast, or some purgative medicine of the mildest kind

should be used. Emetics: of Antimonial wine ℞. are often used with the greatest advantage. Should there be an imperforation into the Duodenum, Death must be the inevitable consequence.

Those persons who are subject to Jaundice, should live chiefly on vegitable food. Milk & Ripe fruits which will not produce flatulency. Exercise should never be neglected. but Distill.d & fermented liquors should carefully be avoided.

In the administration of the above mentioned remedies, regard should always be paid to the age, Constitution & Strength of the patient. Memoria semper tenere oportet, non nominis morbi solum, neque sane generalis ejus naturæ, rationem esse habendam, sed multas vel minutissimas sæpe res esse respiciendas, tum quæ ad morbi originem et causas, et indiciorum varietatem et conjunctionem, tum quæ ad ægri statum et vires, et peculiarem fortasse corporis constitutionem, attinent.